

Media, PA – In honor of Women's History Month and Women in Small Business Day, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA – 07) hosted a Women in Small Business Roundtable at his District Office in Media, Pa. Representatives from seven local businesses, in addition to officials from the Greater Philly Women's Small Business Development Center, Chester Microenterprise and the federal Small Business Administration, joined the Congressman to discuss numerous issues confronting women in business. — "As Vice Chairman of the House Small Business Committee, I am acutely aware of the under-representation of women in Business," said the Congressman. "I want to highlight the success stories and, at the same time, have an opportunity to hear from these business women how the federal government can continue to improve the climate for them and others like them in business."

The Congressman regularly hosts roundtables and other such meetings to bring together local centers of excellence so that he can partner with them to help address the district's challenges by pulling from its strong resources.

This roundtable was no different, as representatives from the companies discussed with the Congressman some of the challenges they face as small business owners, including the fact that median household income, when adjusted for inflation, has dropped some \$300 since 2001. They also discussed the fact that today women own or co-own 30 percent of small business in the United States, yet receive only a marginal percentage of federal contracts. The Congressman has long been aware of this issue and has been working to address it, and, in fact, one of the representatives noted that they were able to use information gleaned from a meeting with the Congressman to secure an upcoming meeting with a major contractor.

The group also noted that they often face challenges of networking, in that they feel a lack of access to resources that aid women business owners to a dearth of contact with other entrepreneurs that may be able to provide personal and business support. To that end, the Congressman and the group planned to join together again to create a networking summit for women in small business to begin to address the challenges raised.

Earlier in the meeting, the Congressman discussed with the group some of his legislative initiatives—including passing amendments on the House floor that aid small business owners as well as having the President sign into law his contracting amendment that requires market research to be conducted by the Department of Defense on the ability of small businesses to do the work prior to awarding contracts of more than \$5 million dollars. signed into law by President Bush—as well as telling them about the many business and economic summits he has held in

the district since taking office. He specifically referenced December's Business Procurement Summit, which attracted 400 businesspeople, 40 large business contractors, and 15 federal and state government procurement agencies. The summit successfully provided local business unprecedented access to large corporate and government contractors.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.